



## Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

### Inquiry into the development of a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland

Health Policy & Positions

**Asthma Australia is the nation's peak asthma body. We are supported and endorsed by some of the world's leading asthma health care professionals and researchers. Our staff and volunteers are leaders in their fields and together we strive to deliver excellence every day for people with asthma.**

#### Declarations

Asthma Australia occasionally receives grants-in-aid from pharmaceutical companies however no funding is provided for advocacy, consultation and submission work. All submissions are prepared and submitted independently.

#### Comments on the inquiry into the development of a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland

Asthma Australia greatly values the role of community pharmacies around Australia who provide critical value to people with and asthmas their carers. 11% of Australians have asthma making it one of the most prevalent and high impact chronic diseases in Australia<sup>1</sup>. Despite such a prevalence, asthma is responsible for only approximately 2% of primary health care consultations<sup>1</sup>. People with asthma have relied increasingly on the availability, professionalism and care of community pharmacists in Australia for decades, sometimes in preference to their general practice and sometimes because their general practice is not forthcoming with best practice asthma care.

Community pharmacies have long provided people with chronic diseases the advice, support, reassurance and education appropriate to manage their illness. A person with asthma usually relies on two different medicines for the effective control of their illness; a preventer and a reliever, and these medicines are in the form of mechanical inhaler devices. People with newly diagnosed asthma require significant education and support to understand their illness, subscribe to their treatment and understand how to use their devices. A person with known asthma usually needs a follow up consultation at least once per year to refresh their device understanding and their self-management skills. These needs are rarely met within the current standard general practice or emergency department consultation. Community pharmacists have stepped into this important role for years.

Asthma Australia strongly urges the committee to consider consumer centredness as a function of the owner-operator model and to satisfy itself that availability and quality of consumer services is not at risk of being compromised in community pharmacy. In short, people with health challenges in Queensland should not lose access to quality accessible services as a result of the development of the council or change in pharmacy ownership legislation. This has the potential to significantly affect the health and wellness of people with asthma, both in the short and long term, and must not be accepted as an unintended consequence of legislative change.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/asthma-other-chronic-respiratory-conditions/asthma/contents/who-gets-asthma>



**Asthma**  
Australia

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Asthma Australia commends the work of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for conducting this inquiry and looks forward to the outcome, which we are confident will reconcile the tensions between the traditional pharmacy ownership models with contemporaneous models which retain the health consumer in primacy.

We would be happy to discuss these issues further if needed.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Goldman  
Chief Executive Officer  
Asthma Australia